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SUBJECT: USUNESCO: UKRANIAN PRESIDENT AND FRENCH FM
PRAISE CULTURAL DIVERSITY CONVENTION AT UNESCO 60TH
ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

1. Summary. In a ceremony at Unesco headquarters on November 16, Unesco marked its 60th anniversary. Featured speakers included Ukrainian president Yushchenko, French Foreign Minister Douste-Blazy and former directors general Amdaou-Mahtar M'Bow and Federico Mayor. A recurring theme in all the addresses was the importance of the recently passed cultural diversity convention. The French Foreign Minister also hinted about future normative instruments on the ethics of science. End summary.

2. On November 16, Unesco repeated the 60th anniversary commemoration held a month earlier during the General Conference. The speech by the keynote speaker, Ukrainian president Viktor Yushchenko, called for Unesco to have greater influence on decisions about the future of humanity in order to promote more effective social and economic justice. Yushchenko also praised the passage of the cultural diversity convention at the General Conference. (comment: his praise of the convention stands in contrast to the diplomatic note received by Embassy Kiev that had promised to support the US position.)

3. French Foreign Minister Douste-Blazy's speech was also full of praise for the cultural diversity convention. Besides the expected platitudes about action to protect culture in the face of standardization (note: code language for Americanization), Douste-Blazy also promised that France will ratify the convention soon and would be working "to promote viable cultural policies throughout the world." (note and comment: Since the passage of the convention in late October, Unesco, the EU and the Francophonie have already held a conference in Viet Nam on developing cultural policy. We can only assume that the cultural policies being discussed relate to more state control of culture.)

4. Douste-Blazy's comments about the ethics of science were also noteworthy. In noting France's role in the elaboration of the Universal Declaration on Bioethics and Human Rights passed at the last General Conference, he said, "France, which actively supported the development of this normative instrument, will continue to push for the progressive establishment of a true universal code of ethics."

5. (SBU) According to sources in the Unesco secretariat, Douste-Blazy was a last-minute replacement

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for President Chirac who was not feeling well enough to attend. Chirac in the past has made frequent use of speeches at Unesco to push French foreign policy initiatives.

6. (SBU) Unesco tradition is to include all living former Director's General at decennial commemorations. Sources in the secretariat indicated that the reappearance of M'Bow and Mayor, neither of whom are seen as having covered themselves in glory, was a source of discontent among many staff members.

7. Comment: The supporters of the cultural diversity convention are clearly in a self-congratulatory mode. Unesco's push to implement the convention and get more involved in helping countries develop ill-defined cultural policies will need to be monitored. While France agreed during the General Conference to a halt in normative instruments in this biennium, the Foreign Minister seemed to be indicating a desire for further normative instruments on the ethics of science in the future.

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